

That thilke wombe in which youre children leye
Sholde, biſorm the peple, in my walkyng,
Be ſeyn at bare; wherfore I yow preye,
Lat me nat lyk a worm go by the weye:
Remembre yow, myn owene lord ſo deere,
I was youre wyf, though I unworthy weere.

Wherfore, in guerdon of my maydenhede,
Which that I broghte, and noght agayn I bere,
As voucheth ſauf to yeve me, to my meede,
But swich a ſmok as I was wont to were,
That I therwith may wrye the wombe of here
That was youre wyf; and heer take I my leue
Of yow, myn owene lord, leſt I yow greve.

THE ſmok, quod he, that thou haſt on
thy bak,
Lat it be ſtille, and bere it forth with
thee.

But wel unnethes thilke word he ſpak,
But wente his wey for routhe and for pitee.
Biſorm the folk hiſelven ſtrepeth ſhe,
And in hir ſmok, with heed and foot al bare,
Toward hir fader hous forth is ſhe fare.

THE folk hire folwe wepyng in hir weye,
And fortune ay they curſen as they
goon;

But ſhe fro wepyng kepte hire eyen dreye,
Ne in this tyme word ne ſpak ſhe noon.
Hir fader, that this tidyinge herde anon,
Curſeth the day and tyme that nature
Shoop hym to been a lyves creature.

for out of doute this olde povre man
Was evere in ſuſpect of hir mariage;
for evere he demed, ſith that it bigan,
That whan the lord fulfild hadde his corage,



PROLOIGNE IS THIS ERL OF PANYK
COME,
Of which the fame up ſprang to moore and
leſſe,
And in the peples eres alle and ſome

Hym wolde thynke it were a diſparage
To his eſtaat ſo lowe for talighte,
And voyden hire as ſoone as ever he myghte.

AGAYNS his doghter haſtiliche goth he
comyinge,
for he by noyſe of folk knew hire

And with hire olde coote, as it myghte be,
He coverede hire, ful ſorwefully wepyng;
But on hire body myghte he it nat bryng,
for rude was the clooth, and moore of age
By dayes fele than at hire mariage.

Thus with hire fader, for a certeyn ſpace,
Dwelleteh this flour of wyfly paciencce,
That neither by hire wordes ne hire face
Biſorm the folk, ne eek in hire abſence,
Ne ſhewed ſhe that hire was doon offence;
Ne of hire heighe eſtaat no remembraunce
Ne hadde ſhe, as by hire contaunce.

No wonder is, for in hire grete eſtaat
Hire goost was evere in pleyne humylitee;
No tendre mouth, noon herte delicate,
No pompe, no ſemblant of roialtee;
But ful of pacient benygnytee,
Diſcreet and pricleeſe, ay honourable,
And to hire housbonde evere meke & ſtable.

Men ſpeke of Job, and moost for his hum-
bleſſe,
As clerkes, whan hem liſt, konne wel endite,
Namely of men, but as in ſoothfaſtneſſe,
Though clerkes preiſe wommen but a lite,
Ther kan no man in humbleſſe hym acquite
As womman kan, ne kan been half ſo trewe
As wommen been, but it be falle of newe.

Explicit quinta pars. Sequitur pars sexta.

Was kouth eek, that a newe markyſſeſſe
He with hym broghte, in swich pompe and
richeſſe,
That nevere was ther ſeyn with mannes eye
So noble array in al Weſt Lumbardye.

The markys, which that shoop and knew al
this,
Er that this erl was come, ſente his meſſage
for thilke ſely povre Grisildis;
And ſhe with humble herte and glad viſage,
Nat with no ſwollen thought in hire corage,
Cam at his heſte, and on hire knees hire
ſette,
And reverently and wiſely ſhe hym grette.

GRISILDE, quod he, my wyl is outrely
This mayden that ſhal wedded been
to me,
Received be tomorwe as roially
As it poſſible is in myn hous to be.
And eek that every wight in his degree
Have his eſtaat in ſittyng and ſervyſe
And heigh pleaſaunce, as I kan beſt devyſe.



I have no wommen ſuffisaunt certayn
The chambres for tarraye in ordinaunce
After my luſt, and therefore wolde I fayn
That thyn were al swich manere governaunce;
Thou knoweſt eek of old al my pleaſaunce;
Thogh thyn array be badde and yvel biſeye,
Do thou thy devoir at the leeste weye.

NAT oonly, lord, that I am glad, quod ſhe,
To doon youre luſt, but I deſire alſo
Yow for to ſerve and pleſe in my degree
Withouthen feynting, and ſhal everemo;
Nenevere, for no wele ne no wo,
Ne ſhal the goost withinne myn herte ſtente
To love yow beſt with al my trewe entente.

And with that word ſhe gan the hous to
dighte,
And tables for to ſette and beddes make;
And peyned hire to doon al that ſhe myghte,
Prepyng the chambereres for Goddes ſake
To haſten hem, and faſte ſwepe and ſhake;
And ſhe, the mooste ſervysable of alle,
Hath every chambre arrayed and his halle.

BOTTEN undren gan this erl alighte,
That with him broghte thiſe noble
children tweye,
for which the peple ran to ſeen the ſighte

Of hire array, ſo richely biſeye;
And thanne at erſt amonges hem they ſeye,
That Walter was no fool, thogh that hym leſte
To change his wyf, for it was for the beſte.

for ſhe is fairer, as they deemen alle,
Than is Grisilde, and moore tendre of age,
And fairer fruyt bitwene hem ſholde falle,
And moore pleaſant, for hire heigh lynage;
Hir brother eek ſo faire was of viſage,
That hem to ſeen the peple hath caught
pleſaunce,
Commendyinge now the markys governaunce.

Auctor

STORMY peple! unſad and
evere untrewel!
Ay unſcreet and chaungyng
as a vane,
Delityng evere in rumbul that
is newe,

for lyk the moone ay wexe ye and wane;
Ay ful of clappyng, deere ynogh a jane;
Youre doom is falſ, youre conſtance yvele
preeveth,
A ful greet fool is he that on yow leeveth!

Thus ſeyden ſadde folk in that citee
Whan that the peple gazed up and down,